



UNITED STATES SENATE
**REPUBLICAN
POLICY COMMITTEE**

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How Many Were There?

A Closer Look at the Seventeen Reported “Hate-Crimes” Murders of 1999

The Federal Bureau of Investigation collects and publishes national crime data. According to its most recent report, there were 17 “hate-crimes” murders in 1999, or about one every three weeks. Everyone agrees that 17 “hate-crimes” murders is 17 too many, but it seems that not everyone understands the larger reality: There were 15,533 murders committed in the United States in 1999, or about 42 murders *every day*.

For every one murder committed because of politically incorrect “hatred” (which usually can better be described as ethnic bias), there were 913 murders motivated by jealousy, rage, envy, lust, stupidity, revenge, run-of-the-mill hatred, or something else. “Hate-crimes” murders constitute only about one-tenth of one percent of all reported murders.

Because of the Senate’s continuing interest in “hate-crimes” legislation, we have taken a closer look at the reported “hate-crimes” murders of 1999. For each of the 17 reported murders, we contacted the FBI and local police departments for additional information, and we searched out additional details in online databases. What we found does not instill confidence in the data. Additionally, it cuts the number of *bona fide* “hate-crimes” murders from 17 to 9.

The reported “hate-crimes” murder from Phoenix, Arizona did not involve a homicide – nobody was killed. The defendant initially was charged with aggravated assault on Santiago Fajardo, but prosecutors eventually dropped the felony charge. We don’t know how the incident got reported as a “hate-crimes” murder.

Nor was there a homicide in the second Arizona case, reported from Bullhead City. We have been unable to obtain details of this case from local authorities, but State officials tell us the crime was an aggravated assault, not a murder.

In the reported case from Laurel, Mississippi, the local authorities deny that the homicide was a “hate crime,” and the facts support the authorities. The case involved two men of the same race arguing over a woman. One of the men killed the other, Bill Ray McGowan, 40, but the

assailant was acquitted of any crime by reason of self defense. Since there was no crime, and no bias motivation even if there had been a crime, there could be no “hate-crimes” murder. In the reported case from Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, the authorities deny that there was a “hate crime,” and again the facts support the authorities. The motive seems to have been robbery plain and simple. The killer wanted the gold-trimmed wheels from Derwin Keith Harding’s car.

In the reported case from Purcell, Oklahoma, the murder of Sandra Legarda-Chavira and the suicide of her killer probably involved a lovers’ quarrel. There appears to be no evidence of bias whatsoever, but the male was black and the female Hispanic. When a boyfriend kills his girlfriend, it is difficult to believe that he was motivated by ethnic bias, even if they were of different ethnic backgrounds. The world may have changed in many ways, but one supposes that boyfriends still admire the skin color of their girlfriends.

In the reported case from Charleston (not Charles Town), West Virginia, the authorities deny there was a hate crime in the bar brawl that ended in the fatal shooting of Kraig Davis. We have in our files a memorandum from the local police department that says the accused “did not violate any hate crime legislation.”

In one of the reported murders from Los Angeles, California, it appears that there was no specific “hate-crime” motivation. A member of one gang gunned down a member of another gang, Michael Richardson, age 22. The murder may have been reported as a “hate crime” because one gang is Hispanic and the other gang is black. We are informed that prosecutors treated this crime as a gang crime and not a “hate crime.”

In the case reported from Crystal Lake, Illinois, a Japanese store owner, Naoki Kamijima, 48, was shot and killed by a man whose bizarre behavior included “baptizing” the lawns of his neighbors. The killer was declared mentally unfit for trial and is institutionalized in a mental hospital. If a killer is too incompetent to be tried for homicide, we wonder how it is possible for a record-keeper to declare that the killer was motivated by bias when he pulled the trigger.

In the nine remaining cases, Winfield Mowder and Gary Matson were murdered in their home in Shasta County, California. Joseph Iletto, a postal worker, was murdered in Los Angeles by a man who had gone on a shooting rampage at a Jewish community center. Jody-Gaye Bailey was murdered in a car in Oakland Park, Florida. Gregory J. Griffith was beaten to death on the streets of Jacksonville, Florida. Ricky Byrdsong was shot on the streets of Skokie, Illinois by a white racist who had gone on a three-day shooting spree over the Fourth of July holiday weekend. The same man murdered Won-Joon Yoon in Bloomington, Indiana, before killing himself. Michael E. Scott of Kansas City, Missouri was killed by a coworker who then shot himself. Michael Hatch was beaten to death in Barron County, Wisconsin.

Our sympathies go out to the families and friends of these murder victims — and to the more than 15,500 *other* families and friends who lost loved ones to murder in 1999.

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RPC Interns Megan Dively and Blake Bailey did the research on the “hate-crimes” murders.